

Flournoy. 17 December 1824.

My dear Dilke,

In answer to your favour of 31st July 1824, or rather in second answer, for the first I sent on 6th Sept^r 1824, I beg leave to inform you, — but first I must wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year, the usual beef, ham, turkey, plum pudding, mince pies, and a bowl of punch of my own making; — ditto to wife, — ditto to Wentworth, and ditto to all I know; — Carlino tells me he wished to say all that, but he is too late. Now for my second answer to your favour of 31st July 1824. No, I can't come to that yet; for I've a story to tell first. (I think, if I had studied it, I could not have commenced my letter with a more astounding interest; — but let that rest.) A few days ago, I received a letter from Galigurne in Paris, asking me for Keats's autographs, and telling me they were on the eve of publishing his works. I had heard of this, wished to communicate with them, and was told the volume was published, — so, with regret, I remained silent. It appears, however, I was in time. I have answered them in a manner to make them wish for my pen, and Keats's MS., — now, perhaps, too late to enter into an arrangement with them. Be that as it may, (your father's favourite expression,) I am resolved, seeing that Keats is better valued, to write his life. I can find time for it and Melancthon's work together, — with a spice of faggings, to which I have not the slightest objection. In doing this I shall want the letter from George to you, of which you gave me a loose account in the said letter of 31st July 1824, — or a copy of ^{George's} — and that as soon as convenient. Fact is, your account of the business was, as I thought at the time, though I was willing to take the best side, lame in the extreme. I think his may be a better story, and therefore wish to see it. Besides, upon taking it into my head it is time to write Keats's life, I read a packet of letters, in which I found a few things against your statement, (if statement it may be called,) and a letter from Abbey, addressed to Keats, upbraiding him for having given or

lent, (for another which, ^{all} his money to George. Then again, I have one of Abbey's
Accts Current with Theats, wherein there are two or three matters which I
cannot reconcile with what, you say, George asserts. There are also, taking
them in their general tenors, documents much against George. You will guess
from this that I do not think George has been calumniated, unknowingly
by Theats, and afterwards by me, in repetition. You will give me credit
for wishing to see things in the best view, if I can. This, be not fearful that
I will make a cruel use of the letter from George; quite the contrary; all
that I want is authority for stating that Theats's generosity to his Tom
when under age, and to George after 21, diminished his fortune, ~~and~~ or rather
finished it, ~~and~~ or something to that effect, - I mean that it shall not be a
stigma on George, - you understand me of course. Now, taking the uncharitable
side, in answer to George's saying he ever avoided mentioning to Theats his
poverty, - I have proofs to the contrary; and proofs of George's extrava-
-gance, in a letter from Theats to him, and to Abbey. I know that
Theats himself never was extravagant; that he well was aware of the value
of money; that he could well understand an account, - though latterly
(though I would not permit it) he wished to avoid examining any; that he,
as he told me, impoverished himself by lending money to George before he was
of age, and that George repaid him in the lump, without an account, which
Theats believed he kept, and therefore Theats did not; and moreover that this
sum; paid on George's first going to America, was not to Theats ~~or~~ ^{or} to
my mind, satisfactory. All this is between ourselves. I only want
George's own statement, word for word, - not, as you see, for any harsh purpose.

If, in any letters from Theats to you, there should be some
papers worth recording, (for his entire letters, unless on very particu-
-lar occasions, ought not to be printed) let me have them, - with
the Dates of the letters, - for the Dates are of importance to me.

Do you remember advising me never to mention Theats's origin to
Hunt? I never did. He learnt it, I suppose, from Clarke, a little while
before he wrote the account of Theats. Think what a use he has made of

that information; — "his origin was of the humblest description; he was
~~born~~ born at a livery stables in Moorfields, &c." Now I can state all
that affair, without telling a lie, in a more decent manner. The truth is, heaven,
there is damned bad grammar in Hunt's indecency! As the world goes, (though
you and I would not have cared if Theate had been the hangman's
barbarian,) such bald and untame words may have a bad effect, — for
they are untame, as far as humblest is concerned, and even as far as
a livery stables is concerned; he, Hunt, ought to have known better,
because, though it is true a God was born in a manger, his admirers,
or worshippers, or priests would rather he had been born in a palace.
I hope Hunt's account of him, though every sentence, I verily believe, was
intended to his honour and fame; but what does that matter when he
manages to make him a whining, pining boy? The truth is, Hunt
seems to be so much impressed by his illness, that he forgets he was ever
in good health. How odd, — Hunt must make some vile mistake.

I have

4th He says that, on his return to America, he arrived with exactly £700. Then, forgetting his arithmetic, in his haste to depreciate Tom's estate and prove that he, a creditor for more than £400, only borrowed of John £170, he makes it out that he could not possibly have left London with more than £440, - unless indeed some kind friend there made him a present of £260, and paid his passage!

5th You make him say Tom's estate, after paying the Doctor's bill, and the funeral expenses, was reduced to ^{about} £1,100, but you meant, as I see by the after sum, £1,200. Tom's fortune was equal to George's, which was about £1,600, and the stocks had not fallen. So, Sawrey's bill, (a moderate one, though I forget the amount,) and the Undertaker's, (under £28) amounted to about £400! 6th George says he left £100 with John, when he went, for the second time, to America. John, after taking leave of him in town, came to me at Southampton, pulled out a packet of notes from his pocket, placed them in my hands, and told me that was all George had left him. I counted them instantly; they amounted to £40. He and I then sat down to calculate how much he owed, and we found it to be about £60; so he was left by George about £20 in debt. 7th George says that, on his return from America, he found that John had used £100 of Tom's estate. John told me he had not touched a penny of it, and that George took it all, except the £40. John was certainly in the right, as I can pretty well prove. It was in 1819. On 2 and 3 April of that year he drew £106.7.7. out of Abbey's hands, as off A.C. Current, being the remains of the £500 and interest. A considerable portion of that sum (£106.7.7) went, as I know, to pay bills; with the remainder he went to the Isle of Wight. There I joined him; we then went to Winchester, where he received £40, on loan returned from a friend. We lived as economically as we comfortably could; and, as I said, he was, at the end of the year, about £60 in debt. Now, how could he have spent £100 in addition to those sums? Indeed I am sure he never had it, - he could not.

I have done with his defence. ^{My reputation} ~~My reputation~~ ^{delinquency} ~~delinquency~~ ^{I omit.} ~~I omit.~~ It has filled me with disgust. I hate him more than ever, and feel tempted to put these documents to a vindictive use. Once or twice I was on the point of throwing this paper in the fire; but I wished to prove the knave a knave; and I am anxious to disprove any idea that may be entertained of my having either rashly or wantonly spoken against him. If you imagine there ^{are} any who hold such an opinion of me, let them see this letter; but I beg the favours of you ^{the two to whom I have most spoken against George} to show it to Miss Osborne & Mansel.

I own myself mistaken when I said that George had taken from his brother, according to my calculations, somewhere about £700; the mistake arose from my not asking John whether the sum he named was money or stock, (it turns out to have been stock,) - from my not being aware of a prior and separate claim on the part of the sister on Tom's estate for £100, and from my having understood that ~~John~~ John, to the last, ^{when George took all} had still a balance in Abbey's hands; - then it would have amounted to about £700. But whether that sum or half the sum, the crime was the same, - leaving his brother worse than destitute, - in debt. I now calculate the sum he took was full £425, & but it is useless to explain the calculation. I'd rather write a second letter on other subjects, which I will, as an envelope for this. Yours most truly, Chas. Brown.